

**NORTHBROOK, IL** - U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk announced today the first legislative action to force BP to withdraw its plan to increase ammonia and industrial waste dumping in Lake Michigan. The announcement came at the first meeting of the Shoreline Mayors Taskforce, a group including 10 communities that border Lake Michigan in the 10th Congressional District.

"If BP does not protect Lake Michigan, then Congress should step in and provide protection," Congressman Kirk said. "My amendment to the House energy package will deny capital expense tax credits to any refinery that increases net pollution into the Great Lakes. Last week, Congress voted 387 to 26 to condemn BP's actions. If commonsense does not prevail, Congress will consider removing federal benefits from any company that plans to increase pollution in the Great Lakes. Taxpayers should block benefits to companies that poison Lake Michigan."

Kirk worked with concerned community leaders to form the Shoreline Mayors Taskforce in response to BP's plan to increase pollution in Lake Michigan. The Taskforce will initially focus on the BP problem, but will also engage on other issues impacting shoreline communities in the 10th District including: beach closings, sewage dumping, mercury pollution, shoreline bluff protection, asbestos contamination, PCB remediation and Asian carp infestation.

The meeting was attended by mayors, village presidents and city managers representing Wilmette, Kenilworth, Highland Park, Highwood, Lake Forest, North Chicago and Waukegan. Members of the Taskforce heard presentations from USEPA technical staff Peter Swenson and John Mooney regarding water and air permits for BP's expansion project. Cameron Davis, president of the Alliance for the Great Lakes, discussed the environmental implications of BP's plan to increase pollution levels.

The mayors also agreed to send a letter to Bob Malone, Chairman of BP North America, requesting that the company rethink its decision to dump in the Great Lakes. In addition to drinking water quality concerns, many communities have beaches that provide important revenue for local economies. Ammonia promotes algae blooms that can kill fish, resulting in higher concentrations of E. coli, a major factor in beach closings. Last year, 81 percent of Illinois beaches were declared unsafe during part of the summer. Closing a Lake Michigan beach due to bacteria contamination has an economic cost from \$7,935 to \$37,030 per day.

In a permit issued by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, BP received permission to dump 54 percent more ammonia and 35 percent industrial waste as part of a \$3.8 billion expansion project. BP also received an exemption on federal discharge levels for mercury, a powerful neurotoxin, for five years.